



Expert Roundtable Calls for Inclusive and Sustainable Trade at EU Development Days

Brussels, 26 November 2013 -- An inclusive and sustainable approach to trade is urgently needed, according to a roundtable of experts participating in a Green Economy and Trade session today at European Union Development Days 2013.

Hosted by UNEP, the roundtable explored the role of trade in a green economy transition. The discussion highlighted the first results of three pilot projects under UNEP's "Green Economy and Trade Opportunities Project" (GE-TOP), supported by the European Commission (EC) under the Thematic Programme for Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources including Energy (ENRTP).

At United Nations Rio+20 conference last year, countries recognised the green economy as an important tool for achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication, while trade was identified as an engine for development and sustained economic growth.

The session covered the benefits of green economy measures for trade, employment, development and the environment. It also showcased examples of UNEP's country-level work on trade opportunities that arise from a green economy transition currently underway in Ghana, Peru and Viet Nam.

In Ghana, the export potential of solar energy and solar energy components is being assessed. Serguei Ouattara, President of the EU-Africa Chamber of Commerce, noted Ghana's role as a regional leader in sustainable and green energy. The project serves the dual aim of enhancing solar capacity and regional energy integration. Conducted by The Energy Centre (TEC) in Ghana and supported by the relevant government ministries, the project has local and regional ownership which will be essential for the uptake of the findings. In this regard, there is huge potential for rural populations in particular. People are willing to reinvest in their countries, and at the same time respect local values and traditions.

Peru is working to enhance its biotrade sector and encouraging the export of sustainable crops, such as quinoa. Luz Caballero, Deputy Permanent Representative of Peru to the World Trade Organization and the United Nations, noted that Peru has some of the world's most important biodiversity. Therefore, its biotrade sector is an opportunity for the country to protect its natural resources, while eradicating poverty. A recent UNEP study provides insights into potential benefits that the biotrade sector could bring to the country. Officials hope to build on the report's outcomes, for example, by ensuring value chains include more small and medium-sized enterprises and by encouraging the processing of value-added products.

In Vietnam, certified aquaculture provides both opportunities for export and a boost to local food security. The work in Vietnam is part of a joint effort between UNEP, IDH's

Sustainable Trade Initiative and the Vietnamese Ministry of Industry and Trade. Pedro Eikelenboom of IDH explained that they work with leading brands and retailers that want to upscale sustainable production and trade. Flavio Corsin, IDH's manager for Vietnam, pointed out that the debate on trade opportunities and green economy should focus on the increased market access that can arise from green economy measures.

Hugo Schally, Head of Global Sustainability, Trade and Multilateral Agreements Unit of the EC Directorate-General for the Environment, underlined that a green economy transition does not simply entail adding a green layer to a brown economy. But, instead, it requires a full transformation of key economic sectors, taking due account of the three pillars of sustainable development and incorporating resource considerations into future consumption and production patterns.

Anja von Moltke, UNEP Acting Head of Trade, Policy and Planning Unit in the Economics and Trade Branch, moderated the discussion, underscoring how these examples enhance the understanding of the role of trade opportunities in the development and implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One of the key messages in the discussion related to the importance of sustainable trade as a means of implementation for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda and the importance of defining concrete targets and indicators.

Current measurements of prosperity and growth are almost exclusively economic indicators, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Participants said that they found such measures "inadequate" and called for equal inclusion of the three pillars of sustainable development in measuring prosperity. The group found that the SDGs could be a powerful tool to communicate better measures, and at the same time, create greater bargaining power for marginalized trade actors.

For more information, please contact anja.moltke@unep.org or visit the EU Development Days website at: <http://eudevdays.eu/topics/green-economy-and-trade>